スフィンクスの魔女 Vol.05

The Witches of the Sphinx

スフィンクスの魔女シリーズ、堂々の完結！

1943年、北アフリカ戦線。
スエズ運河奪回作戦「スフィンクス」は戦線瓦解の危機にひんしていた。
その時、パットン率いる戦略予備部隊が到着する。一転する戦況。
稲垣真美とシャーロット・リューダー二人の幼い魔女達も再会し双方の窮地を開く。
しかし、無名都市に封印されていた「ネウロイ」は、人類の予想を遥かに超えていた！
砂漠の果てて人類は問われる、人類存亡や如何に。
魔女とは何か。ネウロイとは何か。そして、人類とは何か。
灼熱の北アフリカを舞台に魔女と兵士たちが繰り広げる一大戦争叙事詩。
マンガに加え、兼光ダニエル真の小説「カプツッオの魔女」を日英表記で集録。

The Witches of the Sphinx reaches its final conclusion.The North African Front, 1943. Operation Sphinx, the offensive aimed to take back the Suez Canal, was in grave danger of having its front lines collapse. But then, the strategic reserve unit led by Patton arrived in time and reversed the fortunes of battle. Mami Inagaki and Charlotte Luder, two young witches rejoin and relieve each other's anxieties. However, the Neuroi unsealed from the Anonymous Metropolis far exceeded anything humanity could imagine. At the far reaches of the desert, humanity faces the critical question—Who are you? What does it mean to be a witch? What is the Neuroi? And what is the true nature of humanity? A colossal war epic involving witches and men rages in the North African inferno. Witches of the Sphinx 5 not only includes an original manga, but features the first novella by Yoshi Kanemitsu—The Witch of Capuzzo, all in Japanese and English.

スフィンクスの魔女
The Witches of the Sphinx Episode 5
スフィンクスの魔女5

題字：王小東右衛門

スフィンクスの魔女 5

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絵：A士 art: Ace
文・翻訳：兼光ダニエル真 text and translation: Dan Kanemitsu

64p 四コマ
絵：A士 art: Ace

65p 小説『カプッツォの魔女』
Novel『The Witch of Capuzzo』
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STORY and CHARACTERS

The Story So Far:

過去の負傷によってウィッチを引退した加東圭子。彼女はネウロイとの激戦が続くアフリカのトブルクに、アフリカの星として名高いハンナ・ユスティーナ・マルセイユの取材に訪れた。取材の中でマルセイユの人となりに触れ、再びウィッチとして空を飛ぶ事を決意する。その結果、戦闘に専念したいマルセイユによって、なし崩しに統合戦闘飛行隊「アフリカ」の隊長として祭り上げられ、日々頭の痛い思いをしている

Keiko Kātō was a witch forced to retire after being injured. She traveled to Africa as a journalist to cover the story of the legendary "Star of Africa," Hannah-Justina Marseille, an aerial witch involved in the intense combat taking place in Tobruk. After getting familiar with Marseille, she decided she wants to fly once again as a witch. In the ensuring days, Marseille propped Kātō into the role of commander of Joint Fighter Squadron Africa much to Kātō's surprise. This was primarily because Marseille wanted to avoid the mundane duties of being a unit commander, and thus Keiko, or Kei for short, had to endure rather vexing days following her return to military duty

Story Background:

世界各国は謎の敵ネウロイの侵攻を受けていた。地中海の南、アフリカでもそれは同じで、人類とネウロイが、最前線の要衝トブルクを中心として、一進一退の戦いを繰り広げていた。その空の護りを一手に引き受けているのが、「アフリカの星」として知られる、ハンナ・ユスティーナ・マルセイユである。

Nations around the world were being invaded by the mysterious enemy, Neuroi. The same held true on the southern coastlines of the Mediterranean, where humanity and the Neuroi were locked in a bitter seesaw battle around strategic city of Tobruk, Africa. The skies in the area were being singlehandedly protected by Hannah-Justina Marseille, well known as the Star of Africa.

Characters:

ライーサ・ペットゲン
カールスラント空軍 JG27 後、統合戦闘飛行隊「アフリカ」所属 マルセイユの僚機
Raisa Pottgen
Aerial witch of Karlsland Air Force 27th Fighter Wing, later incorporated into Joint Fighter Squadron "Africa." Marseille's wingman

ハンナ・ユスティーナ・マルセイユ
カールスラント空軍 中尉
「アフリカの星」とよばれる北アフリカ戦線のエース
Hannah-Justina Marseille
Karlsland Air Force lieutenant 1st class
Ace aerial witch on the North Africa front known as "Star of Africa."

稲垣真美
扶桑陸軍 軍曹
扶桑から派遣された航空魔女
Mami Inagaki
Fuso Army sergeant
Aerial witch dispatched from Fuso

加藤圭子
扶桑陸軍 大尉
元魔女のカメラマンだったが、マルセイユと出会い現役復帰。統合戦闘飛行隊「アフリカ」の隊長
Keiko Kātō
Fuso Army captain
Formerly a retired witch turned cameraman, but returns to active duty following her encounter with Marseille
Commander of Joint Fighter Squadron "Africa"

マイルズ
ブリタニア王国陸軍 少佐 第4戦車旅団C中隊の隊長
Miles
Royal Britannia Army major
Commander of C Squadron, 4th Armoured Brigade, Royal Britannia Armoured Corps

マティルダ
マルセイユの従卒。マルセイユ個人の部屋、バーの管理、ボディーガードを務める
Matilda
Marseille's attendant
Oversees upkeep of Marseille's private quarters and bar. Also acts as her personal bodyguard

フレデリカ
カールスラント陸軍 技術少佐
重陸戦ストライカーユニット「ティーガー」の運用試験に当たる
元地上攻撃魔女
Frederica
Karlsland Army technical specialist major
Former ground attack witch involved in the field testing of a "Tiger" heavy land combat striker unit

北野古子
扶桑陸軍 軍曹
Furuko Kitano
Fuso Army sergeant

シャーロット
カールスラント陸軍
重陸戦ストライカーユニット「ティーガー」を操る
Charlotte
Karlsland Army
Operates a "Tiger" heavy land combat striker unit

パットンガールズ
リベリオン陸軍第一軍団所属の陸戦魔女達
The Patton Girls
Land battle witches belonging to Liberion Army's II Corps

G. S パットン
リベリオン合衆国 中将
George S. Patton
Liberion Army lieutenant general

バーナード・ロー・モントゴメリー
ブリタニア王国陸軍 中将
Bernard Law Montgomery
Royal Britannia Army lieutenant general

エルヴィン・ロンメル
カールスラント空軍 中将
Erwin Rommel
Karlsland Army lieutenant general

島田フミカネ（キャラ原案）
Humikane Shimada (Original Character Designs)
http://www.ne.jp/asahi/humikane/e-wacs/
イラストレーター。「ストライクウィッチーズ」原作＆キャラクターデザイン原案、「スカイガールズ」コンセプチュアルメカデザイン＆女性キャラクター原案などを手がける。
Illustrator. Involved in *Strike Witches* as original creator and original character designer, and as conceptual mechanical designer and original female character designer in *Sky Girls*, among other projects.

鈴木貴昭
Takaaki Suzuki (Novelization)
http://yamibun.air-nifty.com/blog/
ライター。「ストライクウィッチーズ」脚本、軍事・世界観考証、「LAST EXILE」文芸、軍事顧問、脚本、他アニメSF考証や、「MC☆あくしず」にて記事連載などを手がける
Author. Participated in the original production of *Strike Witches* as script writer as well as military and world construct advisor. Also involved in *Last Exile* as script production supervisor, military affairs consultant, and script writer. Active as a science fiction concept advisor to numerous animation projects as well as writing numerous serialized articles in the magazine *MC☆Axis*.

野上武志（マンガ）
Takeshi Nogami (Comic Book Adaptation)
http://firstspear.com/
日本のマンガ家。代表作は「萌えよ！戦車学校」「セーラー服と重戦車」「蒼海の世紀」など。
Japanese manga author. Notable works include *Moeyo! Tank School*, *Sailor Suits and Heavy Tanks*, and *The Azure Century Chronicles*.

兼光ダニエル真（翻訳）
Dan Kanemitsu (Translation)
http://www.translativearts.com/
翻訳家。多数の作品の和英・英和翻訳担当。英語監修や文化考証でも活動。「新劇場版エヴァンゲリヲン」「フラッククラーン」等の制作に参加。
Translator. Involved in the Japanese-English / English-Japanese translation of numerous works. Active as an English language supervisor and cultural reference advisor. Recently participated in the production of *the New Theatrical Evangelion* series and *Black Lagoon* as well as other projects.

翻訳協力 Simona Stanzani
ブリタニア語編集協力 Ben Carter　David Fleming
ロマーニャ考証 吉川和篤
編集協力 北かづき
魔戦砲デザイン Excel
ロマーニャ考証 吉川和篤

援軍!?
Reinforcements!?
嘘……!?
I don't believe it…!?
シャーロット!
Charlotte!

ドドド

凄いお引っ越しだったよ
It was quite a house-moving.
す…すごい…！
Amazing…!
これだけあれば——半年は戦えるわ！
We could keep on fighting for half a year with all this!
戦争って物量なんですね♥
War is all about logistics, isn't it?
街——一個分!?
An entire city's worth!?

一切合切
Take ALL of this--
ロンメルの所に配達せよ！
And deliver it to Rommel!
私達のいた補給基地がネウロイを撃退した直後
After we beat back the Neuroi that attacked our supply station…
パットンおじさまがやってきたって言ったの！
Nice Mr. Patton came by and gave the word!
そしたらすごいテキパキと…！
And then everybody there started working right away…!
ね―！
補給所の人達ってただのグータラな暇人じゃなかったのね…！
I feel embarrassed for thinking that the people assigned to supply stations were unmotivated slackers…!
フォフォお嬢さん方
Heheh My dear lassies…
褒めても何も出んぞ！
Such kind words won't win you any special rewards from me!
てしっ

それよりここはワシ等―
You've got more pressing matters to attend to.
ギャラギャラ
ギャラ
我々「暇人ども」に任せて――
The Slackers and I shall attend to business here.
行きたまえ！
Go to where you are needed most!
はい！
Yes Sir!

ドドドド
ペシペシ
右2時方向雑魚ネウロイ！
Cannon fodder Neuroi to our two o'clock.
戦車長
Commander!
！

撃てェ
Fire at will.
貴様らのへなちょこビーム熱線など――
Your feeble heart rays..
このワシには当たらん！
--Have no chance of zapping me!
ゲートハウス少将！
It's Major General Gatehouse!
鉄の金玉〝アレックス・ゲートハウス将軍だ！
General Alex "Balls of Steel" Gatehouse!

援軍だあ！
Reinforcements!
補給だあ！
Supplies!
これで勝てるぞぉ！
Righteous!
This'll take us to victory!
ヘイ ロンメル
Hey, Rommel!
さすがだな！
You never cease to amaze
最前線で指揮とは！
Commanding the troops at the very forefront, I see!
Hm...

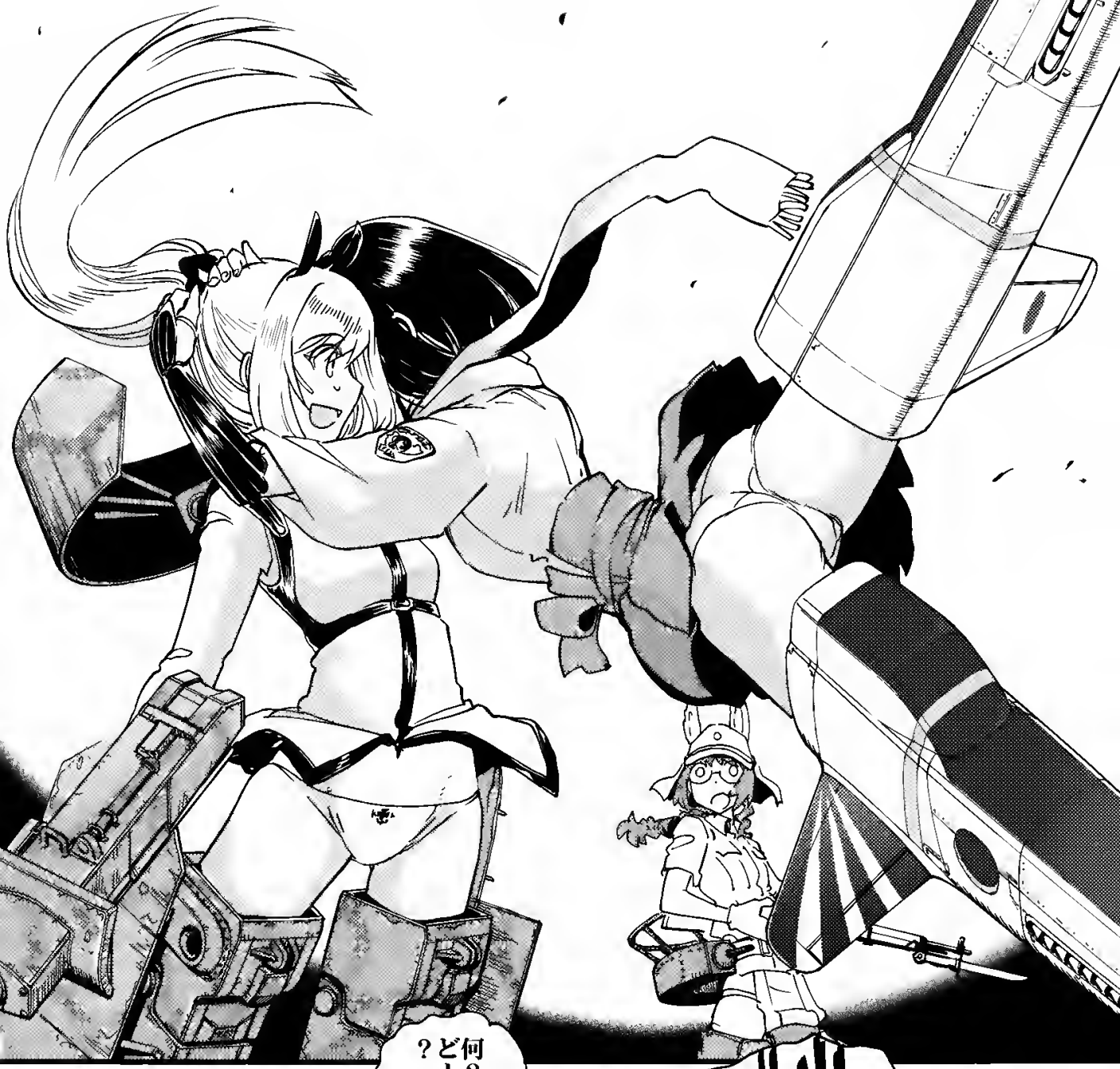
ハッハァ♥
パーティーには
間に合ったな
Bwahaha!
Looks like I made it in time for this shindig!
ニヤニヤ
パットン
お前——
別働隊
では…
Patton, you're supposed to be
Leading a diversionary force…
ワシは貴様の
著書は全部
読んでる！
I've read all your books, damn it!
貴様の行動は
お見通しだ！
Which means, I can read you like a book!
そして——
モンティ
もな！
And so can Monty!
「砂漠のキツネ」を
W・カスター将軍の
二の舞に
させるなんて
ゴメンだからな！
God have mercy on my soul if the Desert Fox ended up like Custer at Little Bighorn!

プリマドンナはロンメルなら――
If Rommel is going to be the "prima donna"..
パットン貴様には――
Then Patton..
英雄役をやってもらう（タイトルロール）
He will play the part of the heroic lead.

フ…
Humph…
モンティめ…さしずめあいつは――
Monty, you sly fox… I suppose…
演出家気取りか？まあいい（ステージ・イレクター）
He intends to be stage director then? So be it.

ズズ ズズズ ズズ
ズッ…
――さあクライマックスだ！
Right... We are at the 3rd act climax!

あの
Um...
その…
Uh...
シャーロット…
Charlott
真美ーあ♥
Oh, Mami!
落ち込んだりもしたけれど――
I feel blue from time to time…
私は元気だよ！
But I'm doing okay!

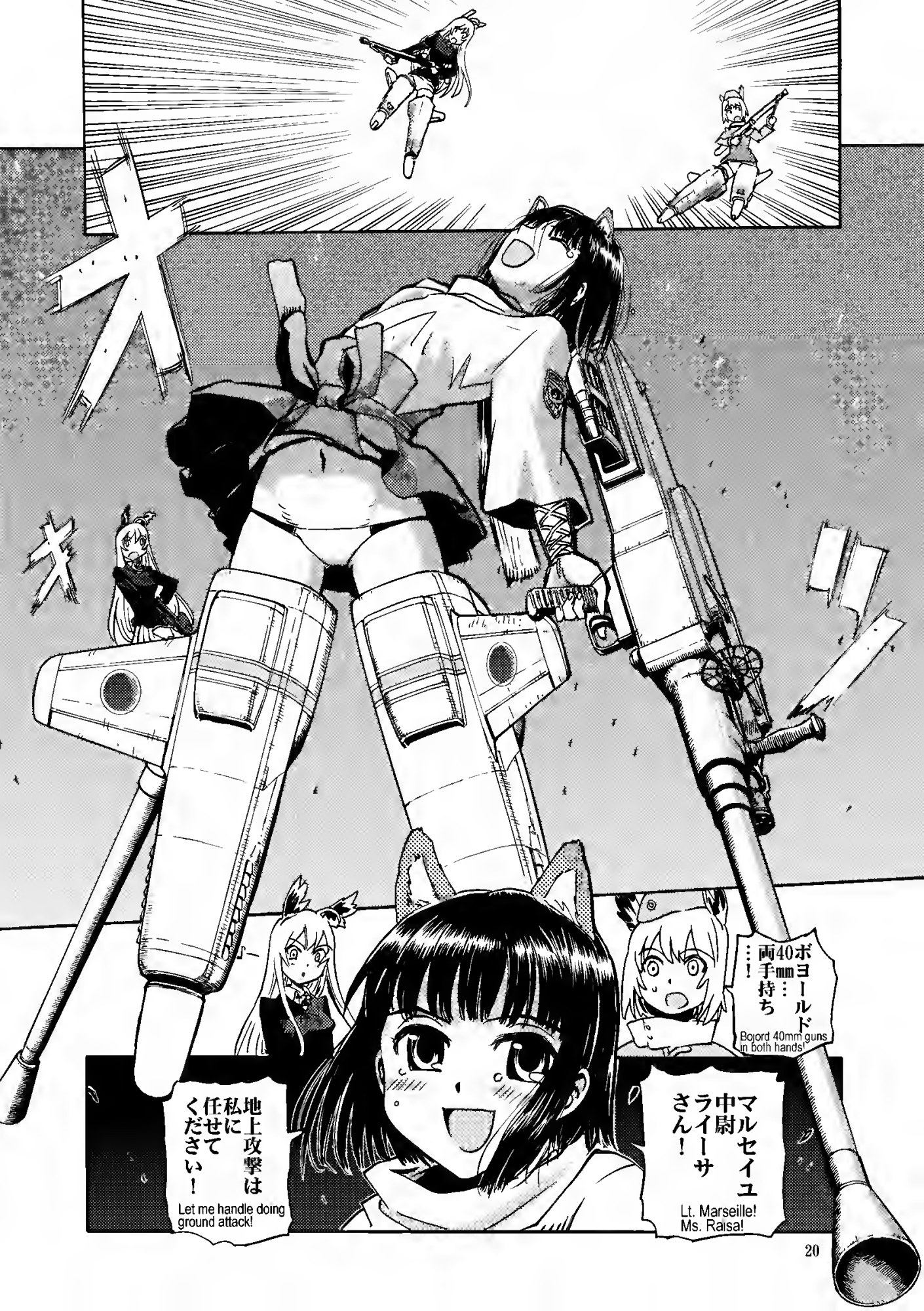


何？どーしたの
What? What happened?
うぇえええ
WahaAAAH AAAH
ヒィィ～ロォォ～
OH CharLOTTE!
ガシャどんがらがっ
あぁあぁ

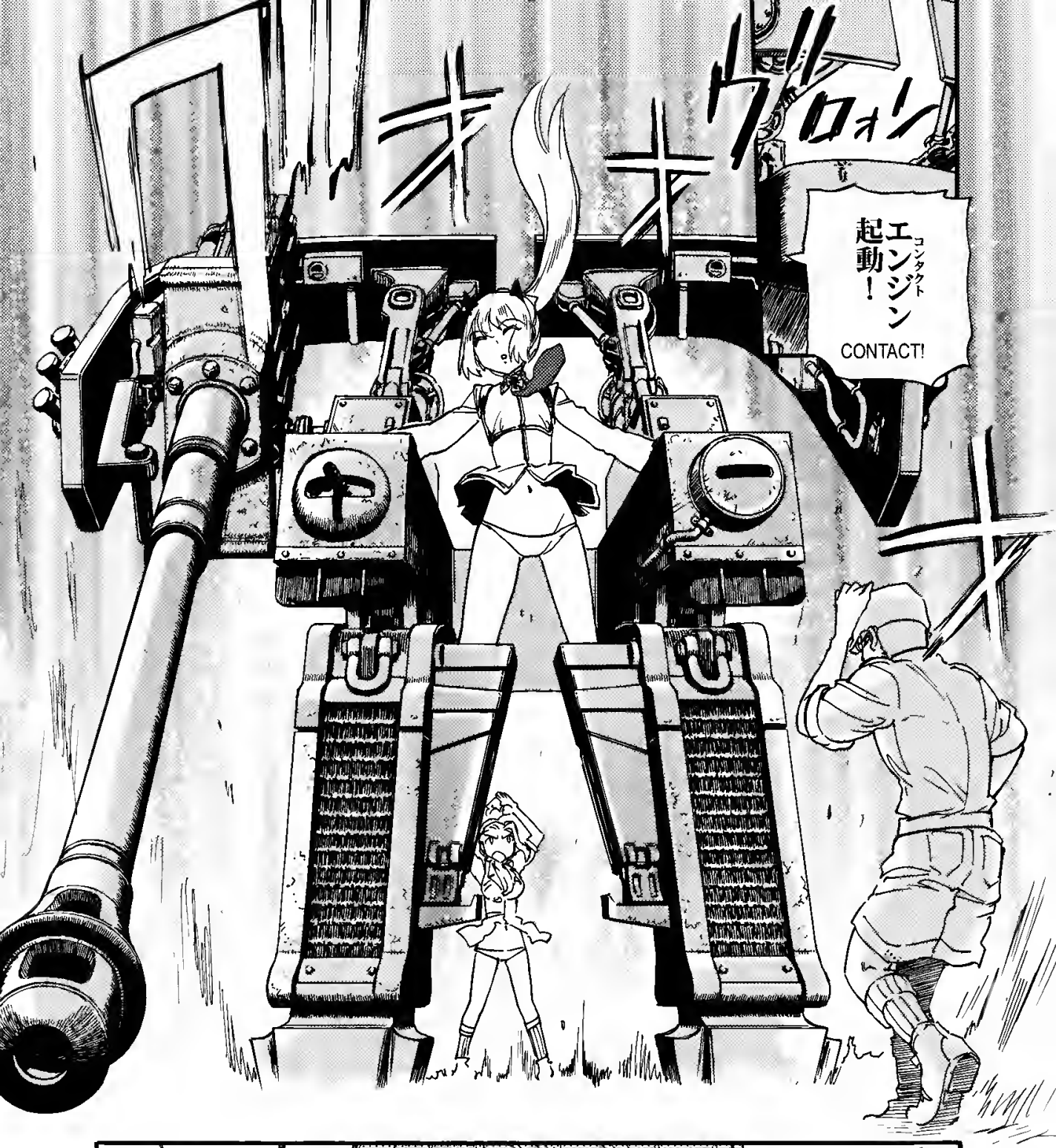
―ねえ聞いて真美！私気付いたの！
Mami, listen I just realized something!
私にはいっぱい家族がいるの！
I've got a huge family, actually!
みんなが私の事を気にかけてくれる！
Everyone cares about me, you know!?
軍人のおじ様達も――
All the nice older soldier people and...
フレデリカさんもシュミットさんも…
And Ms Frederica and Mr. Schmitt
ルコも！みんな大好き！
And Ruko! I love them ALL!
そしてあなたも…
And you too…
大好きよ――真美♥
I love you too, Mami!

ドドド

ヒュン
ガキン
19
！？


ボヨールド40㎜…両手持ち…！
Bojord 40mm guns in both hands!
マルセイユ中尉ライーサさん！
Lt. Marseille! Ms. Raisa!
地上攻撃は私に任せてください！
Let me handle doing ground attack!

たあ
Hur...
りゃあ！
RAAAAA!
ホッホー絶景かな♥♥
Dashing! What a sight to behold!


ウォロォン
エンジン起動！
コンタクト
CONTACT!

Ⅰティーガー
Tiger I
行きます！
Ready for COMBAT!

ドン！
ドン！
すごい…押し返してる！
Oh my
We're pushing them back!

親玉の
Here comes
お出ましね！
–The big bad boss!

ズ ズ ズ ズ

その神異(ネウロイ)は――

This Neuroi...

「神話」であった

Was none other than a legend itself.

荒地の山に住み
旅人を襲う

The dweller of the barren highlands who attack travelers.

謎を出し
答えられぬ者は
ことごとく
喰われた
――その質問は

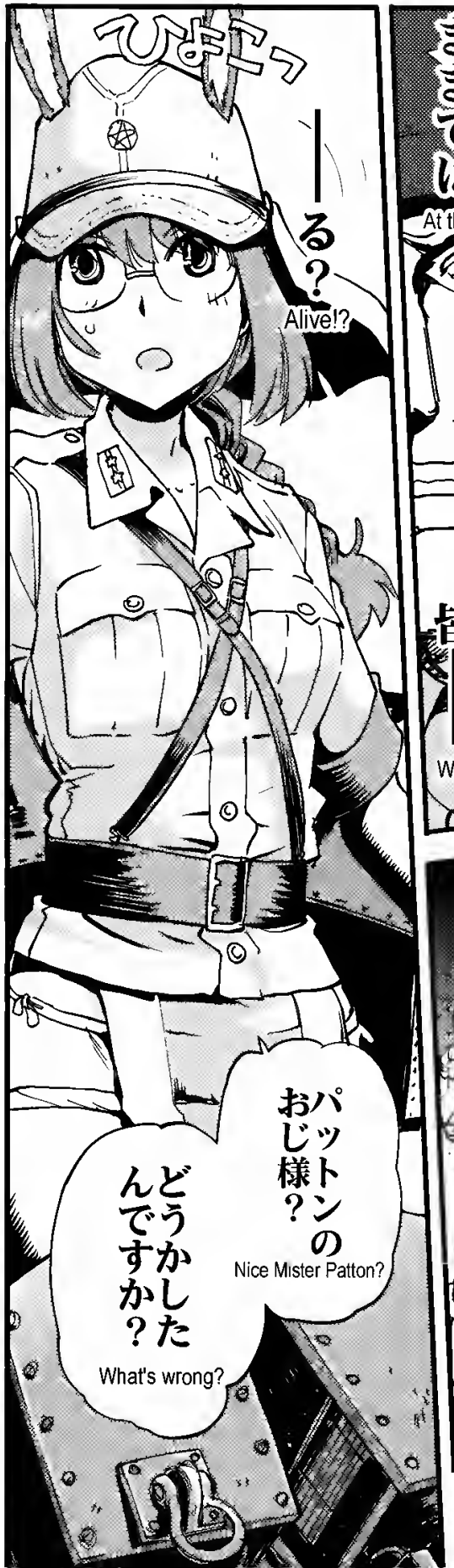
The One who cast out riddles and devoured any who could not answer them. This time, the riddle it asked was...

汝は
何者なりや？
"WHO ARE THOU?"

な…
I...
動かない…
I can't move...
…ロンメル
..Rom..mel...!
…ッ！
Gasp!

ワシは、
This is exactly...
この事態を
恐れていた
What I was afraid of...
ワシ等は軍人
We are soldiers.
個を捨てて全体に
奉仕する存在
We set side our individual needs
for the sake of the whole.
――！
マイルズ
隊長
Captain
Miles!
体が
動かない
!?
We're frozen!?
もし
ネウロイが
「そのよう
な存在」
なら――
If the Neuroi also are
such an existence...

「我々」は
オオオオ
Then...
ネウロイと同じなのでは？
How are we any different from the Neuroi?


このままでは
At this rate...
我々は皆――
We'll all be...
奴に「喰われ」…
Eaten a...
ひょこっ
――る？
Alive!?
パットンのおじ様？
Nice Mister Patton?
どうかしたんですか？
What's wrong?

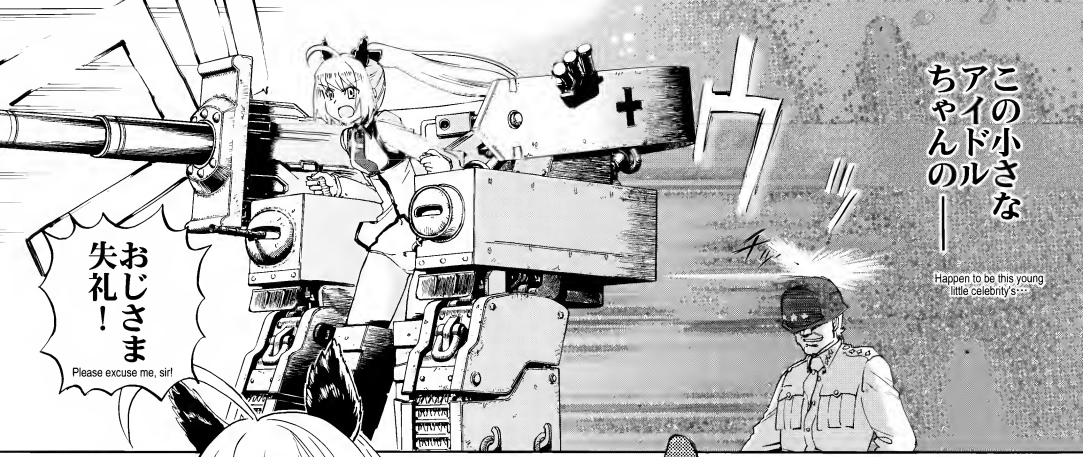
なぜ…君は動ける？
Why How can you move?
何かあ
Oh, I felt like Someone asked…
誰かに聞かれた気がしたんですがね
Who I was, so I said
私は北野古子！
I'm Furuko Kitano!
いつか女の子を綺麗に飾ることをしてみたいです
And I'd like to dress up girls to look even more beautiful!
——って答えました♥
And thats all.

!?
何してるんですか！みなさん！
Hey everyone! What's going on down there!?
さあちゃっちゃと倒して――
Let's just defeat that nasty meanie. .

美味しいご飯
So we can sit down..
食べましょう！
And have a nice meal!
チュッ♡
ゲホゲホッ！
K'OUF K'OUF
あ…動く！
I can move again!
奴と殺れば柏葉付十字章かな
Getting that boss should win me a Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves.
ティナ光りもの勲章なんて欲しかったの!?
I'm shocked, Tina. I never knew you were in for the flashy medals
——ま
Come, come
十字章ってどのつまり無料で貰える女性用装飾具（アクセサリー）だもんな♥
At the end of the day, a Knight's Cross and such are mere jewelry they give out to gals for free.
ぶはっ
男性用もありますぜ！
Actually, they got them for guys as well!

ヒヒヒ
ははは傑作だ！
Hahaha! Now that's a laugh!
俺はアラバマの農民だ
I'm a farmer from Alabama!
妻ラブの亭主よ
I'm a husband head over heels with his wife!
俺はダニエルだ！
MY name's Daniel!
僕は市長になる男だ！
I'm a man that'll be a mayor someday!
あたし弁護士の卵！
And I'm a lawyer in training!
スッ…
これが答えだ——
THIS is our answer
パットン これは——
Patton.. What's..

ワシは「人間」
J・S・パットン
I am a human,
named
George Smith Patton!
ワシは――
And I...


この小さなアイドルちゃんの――
Happen to be this young little celebrity's…
ウ〃〃
おじさま失礼！
Please excuse me, sir!

第一号だ
ファンクラブ
Number one fan!

撃って！
FIRE!

火力を
Everybody..!
集中しろォ！
Concentrate your fire!
AFRICA

あ
Rah!
お
Hur...

戦う
For they were proud warriors...
者
...Every single one of them...

私は
And I..
加東圭子
Am Keiko Katō!
今は魔女をやってるけど本職は写真家よ！
I might be a witch right now, but I'm actually a photographer!

私たちは
人間——
We humans forever...

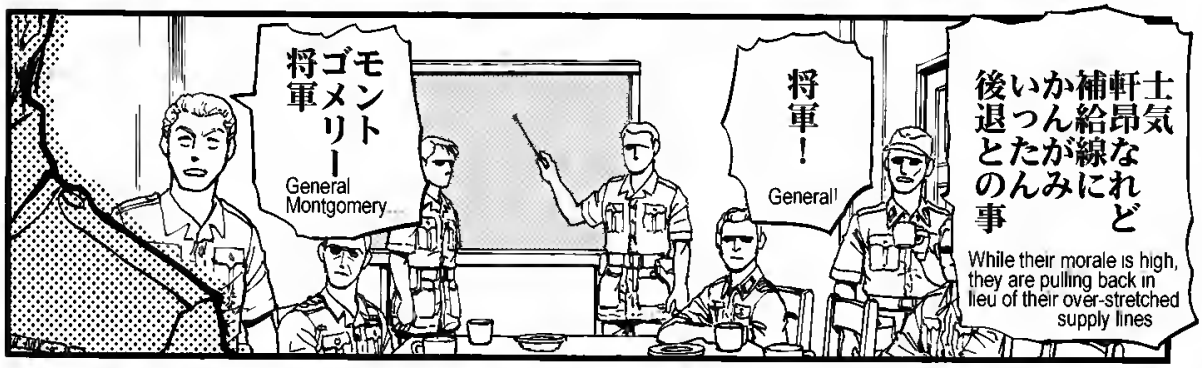
迷い
Anguish...

もがき
Struggle...

ちょっとした
幸せと——
Find joy in the slightest of happiness...

希望を忘れぬ
存在——
And never abandon hope.

トブルク――
Tobruk, a little later
ロンメル軍団の連絡回復！
Communication reestablished with Rommel's forces!


士気軒昂なれど補給線にかんがみいったん後退との事
While their morale is high, they are pulling back in lieu of their over-stretched supply lines
将軍！
General!
モントゴメリー将軍
General Montgomery...

――私は最初からスエズはちょっと遠すぎると思っていた
I always felt we tried to go too far with the Suez as our target.
――だが
But...

我々は必ずスエズを奪回する！
Make no mistake about it. We will reclaim the Suez!

人間とは——
しぶとい意思の生き物だからな！
Humanity happens to be a rather stubborn lot, after all.
スフィンクス作戦はその途中で大規模ネウロイの巣を撃破
戦果は大きかったものの——
While Operation Sphinx had marked successes as in neutralizing a major Neuroi infestation.
その戦略目的は達成できず作戦中止命令が下された
It was unable to secure its strategic goal and the operation was cancelled midway

だが、この作戦に参加した将兵は――

But all the soldiers and officers who participated in the offensive...

誰もがその体験に誇りを持って語ったという――

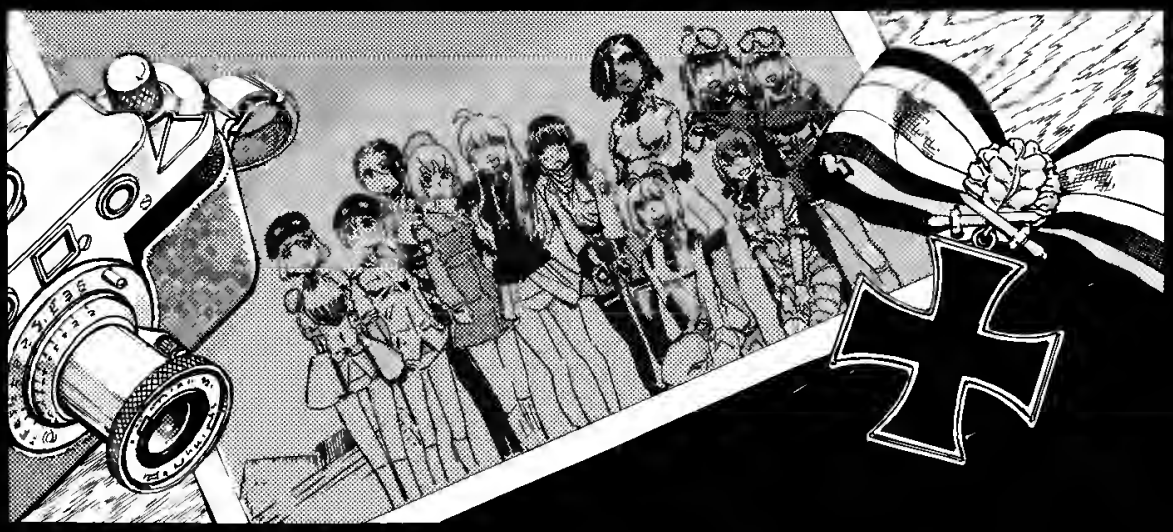
Would recall with much pride about their experiences in the operation.

加東圭子「スフィンクスの魔女」より――

Excerpts from The Witches of the Sphinx by Keiko Kato.

なお、スエズ運河は
同軍団により1945年に
ネウロイの支配下より解放された――

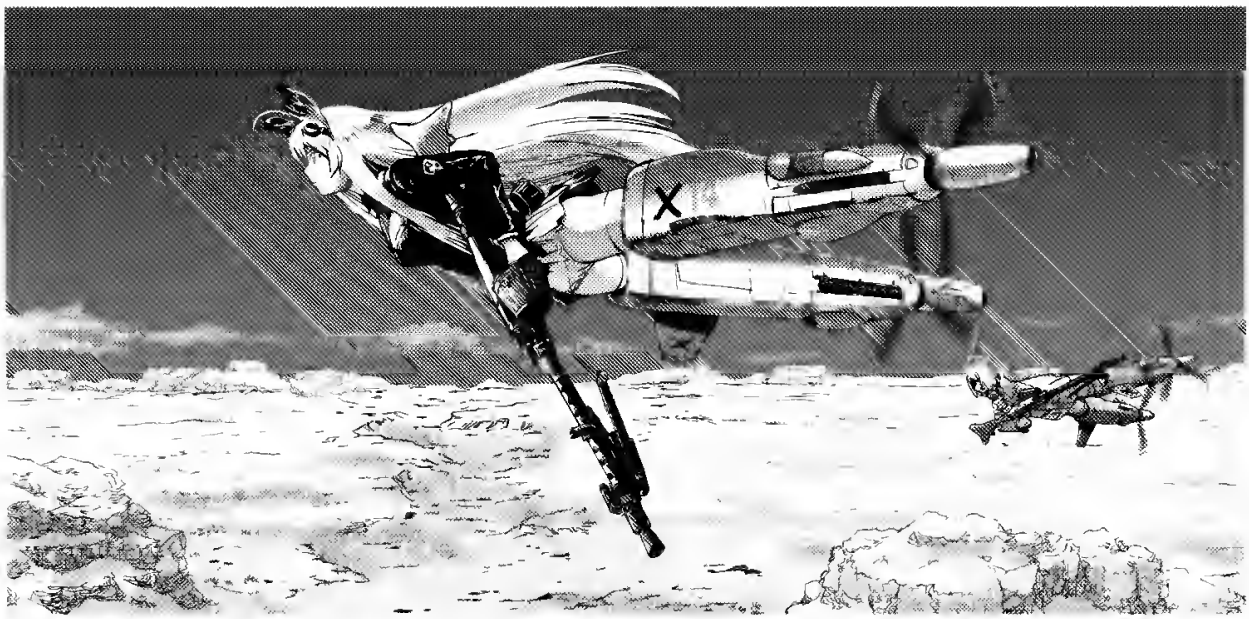
It should be added that this same army group liberated the Suez Cannel from Neuroi forces in 1945.



おしまい

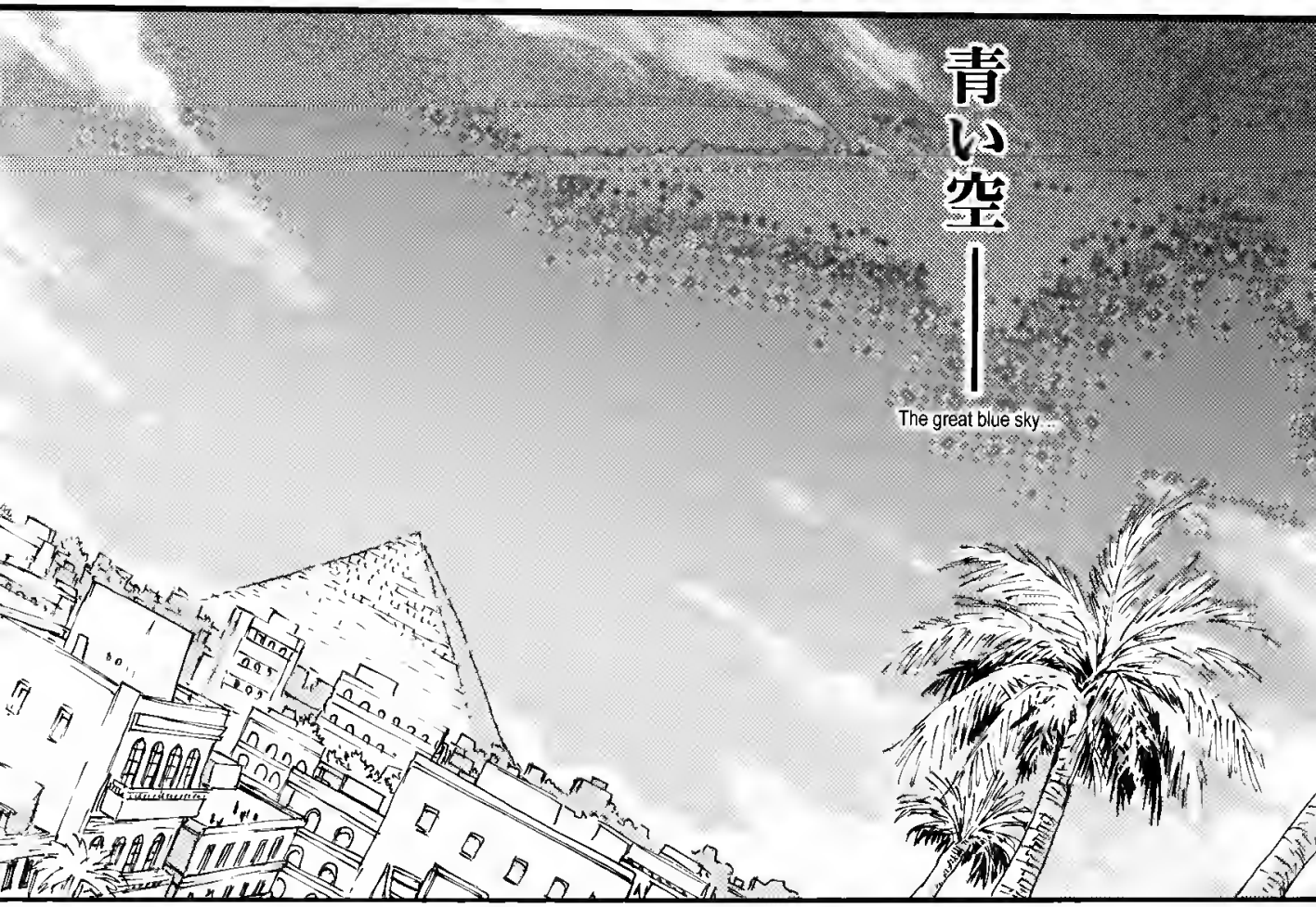
THE END

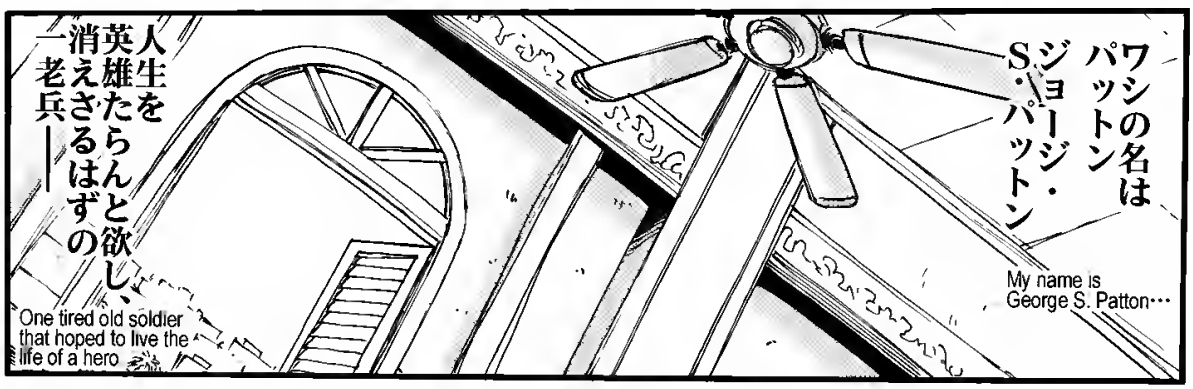
スフィンクスの魔女

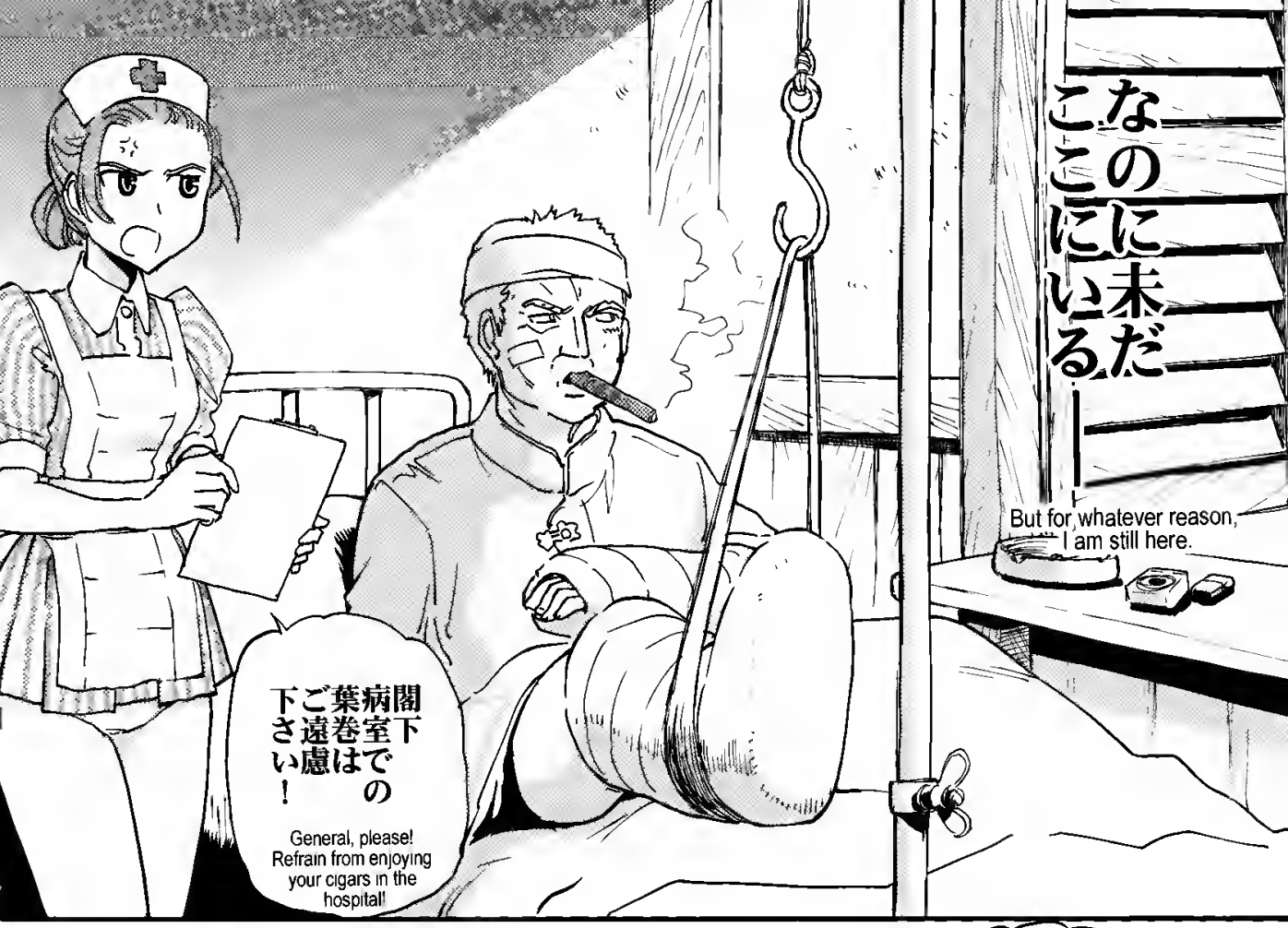


スフィンクスの魔女

epilogue エピローグ






なのに未だここにいる――
But for whatever reason, I am still here.
閣下 病室での葉巻はご遠慮下さい！
General, please! Refrain from enjoying your cigars in the hospital!

パットン閣下
General Patton
運命がまだワシに
Is fate telling me
何かをしろと言うのか――
I have more to do?
先ほど若い女性が来て閣下にこれを――と
A young women requested I deliver this to you
扶桑の――折り紙の鶴――？
A Fusō paper crane...?

そうか…
I see..
もう
ゆくのか…
She must've taken off.
それは
君のとっては
Alas I pray .
むしろ
祝福すべき
事なのだろう
I pray this farewell will open a new blessed chapter in her life.
新しい
「私に出来る事」
を求めて——
In search of a new "something I can do"..
ドドドドド
その女性は
西の果てへ
去ってゆく
The women departed for the far reaches of the West..
ゴロ
ガロン
おーい
あんた！
Hey!
Hey there!
こっから
80kmは
砂漠だよ
The next 80km is desert!
歩きじゃ
干上がっち
まうよ！
You'll shrivel up bone dry if try walking it.
乗ってきな！
Hop on in!

助かります♥
Thank you very much!
とりあえず陸路でガリアまで行きたいんです♥
I'd like to try to make it to Gallia by land
ほらファッションといえばパリだから！
After all, they say Paris is the place to be for fashion!

あんたもしかして…魔女の…！
Hey, wait a minute..! You're that witch..!
やだなあーもう「元」ですよ♥
Please, I'm just an ex-witch now
君のゆく手に幸多からん事を——
Let your passage be full of blessed moments

END

文章：兼光ダニエル真
イラスト：A士

【扶桑皇国陸軍　主力陸上戦闘脚】

九七式中型走行脚「チハ」

「踊る獅子姫」が戦陣で着飾った「鉄帯」

扶桑皇国の陸戦魔女たちは常に戦場で辛い戦いを強いられた。彼女達にとって九七式中型走行脚「チハ」は理想的な陸戦ストライカーとはお世辞にも言えない。だが、地上で怪異（ネウロイ）と直接向き合って戦う魔女達にとって、このチハこそ彼女たちの能力を大きく伸ばした画期的な走行脚であり、皇国陸軍撫子魔女隊の活躍に大きく貢献した。

扶桑海事変や第二次ネウロイ大戦において陸上部隊の窮地を幾度となく救ったのはチハで装備した陸戦魔女だった。上空から助けてくれる航空魔女が「天女」や「頭上の守り神」であったのに対し、高い運動性を発揮して戦場を走り回った陸戦魔女は「獅子姫」として崇められた。敵地に攻め込むにしても、敵の包囲網を打ち破るにしても、ネウロイから陣地を奪い保持し続けられるのは彼女達だけだった。

島国である扶桑は陸上兵力を軽視する傾向があり、ストライカーユニットについても航空型の開発の方が活発だった。ブリタニアから提供された走行脚についてのノウハウを活かした八九式「イ号」走行脚が開発されたが、八九式は鈍重で壊れやすいことから「鉄牛」ならぬ「牛車乗り」（エンコした時に牛車に乗せて運ばれたから）と揶揄されていた。

大陸でのオラーシャ帝国との共同ネウロイ駆逐作戦が始まり、八九式の鈍重な移動力と脆弱な防御力のみならず、戦場での運用でも決定的な問題が発覚。この時、即座に対処策を用意できたのは宮藤博士と交流があった原美緒子大佐であった。試験段階まで開発が進んでいた試作型チハをウラル方面に緊急配備し、第八戦車連隊の指揮官として貴重な運用データを本国に送り続けた。

それまでの八九式に比べると九七式は魔導エンジンと様々な仕様の変更を伴って、機動性と航続距離が飛躍的に向上。チハを装備した魔女の数は常に足りない状況であったにも関わらず、戦線の崩壊を幾度となく防げたのは、その高い移動力と長い航続距離によるもので、神出鬼没の活躍振りから「踊る獅子姫」と呼ばれた。彼女らに深い恩義を感じた将兵の中でウイッチの階級が自分より下でも目上として接していた事から「姫」と言う敬称が備わったと言う説がある。実際、扶桑海事変で戦った多くの陸戦魔女はエリートが多く、単独やペアの活動でも絶大な戦果を上げることが出来た。

扶桑海事変が進むにつれ、魔導エンジンの出力がシールド強化に比重が置かれるように調整され、柔軟な武装の変更が顕著になった。一応チハの標準武装は爆発威力の強い九七式魔戦砲であったが、装甲の高いネウロイに対してこれは不充分と発覚するや否や、より貫通力の強い試製徹甲魔戦砲を投入するだけに留まらず、有効と感じられた武装は何でも活用された。魔女の能力や相性によっては三八式歩兵銃、九六式軽機関銃、九七式自動砲などの個人携帯火器でも目覚しい戦果を上げた例が数々ある。

チハの目覚しい汎用性と航続距離を生かした戦いが第二次ネウロイ大戦において幾度となく繰り広げられた。北アフリカ戦線での北野古子軍曹のチハの活躍はもとより、数々の戦線での多くの獅子姫の武勇伝は今なお残っている。

Type 97 Medium Tracked Legs - "Chiha"

"Metal Sashes" that adorned "Dancing Lioness Princesses" in battle

The Land battle witches of Imperial Fusō always faced difficult situations on the battlefield. One could hardly consider Type 97 medium tracked legs to be ideal land battle striker units. However, the Chiha units were groundbreaking tracked units that phenomenally enhanced the abilities of witches who directly confronted Neuroi on the ground, and thus tremendously contributed to the successes achieved by the Imperial Army Nadeshiko ("ideal Fusō maiden") witch units.

Ground units in peril during the Fusō Sea Incident and the 2nd Neuroi World War were saved countless times by land battle witches who were equipped with Chihas. In contrast to the aerial witches who provided aid from above being called "Heavenly Maidens " or "Guardians of the Sky", the land battle witches who rushed about the battlefield with their high mobility were revered as "Lioness Princesses". No matter if the situation called for striking into Neuroi territory, or breaking through a Neuroi siege, only the Chiha witches could deprive the Neuroi control of an area and maintain control over it.

Being an island nation, Fusō tended to place less importance on ground forces and development of aerial units was much more active. Utilizing the technical know-how they garnered from the tracked legs sent by Britannia, Fusō developed the Type 89 "I-go" (pronounced "Ee-goh") but because of its lack of mobility and propensity to break down, the Type 89 was ridiculed as the "Ox Cart Rider" instead of the "Iron Ox" it was meant to be.

Once Fusō and Orussia started joint operations against Neuroi on the mainland, not only did the Type 89's low mobility and feeble protective qualities become clear, but numerous other critical shortcomings of its battlefield capabilities also became apparent. Colonel Mioko Hara, who had previous dealing with Professor Miyafuji, was quickly able to respond to this crisis. At the time, development of the Chiha tracked legs had reached the trials stage, so she made the arrangements necessary to have them deployed at once to the Ural front. As commander of the 8th Armored Regiment, Colonel Hara sent valuable information regarding operational usage of the Type 97 back to the development team.

Compared to the previous Type 89, installation of a new magic engine and various other design changes enabled the Type 97 to boast phenomenally greater mobility and range. While there never were enough witches equipped with Chihas, they were able to prevent units from being overrun numerous times thanks to their high mobility and extraordinary range. Chiha witches were nicknamed "dancing lioness princesses" because they seemed to be able to appear out of nowhere and drive back the Neuroi. One theory holds that since large numbers of soldiers, both officers and enlisted men, felt such tremendous gratitude toward the land witches, many would treat them as being their superiors regardless of rank, and thus they came to be referred to as princesses. Consequently, many of the witches that took part in the battles involved in the Fusō Sea Incident were elite witches, and scored astonishing successes on the battlefield, both acting alone and acting in pairs.

As the fighting during the Fusō Sea Incident continued, the flow of power from the magic engines was adjusted to enhance the defensive capabilities of the protective shield employed by the witches. Armaments for the Type 97 were modified considerably during this time as well. The standard-issue armament for the Chiha was the Type 97 Witch Combat Gun (WCG), which was designed to defeat Neuroi by means of discharging high explosive shells that inflict blast damage, but once it became clear that this methodology was ineffective against more heavily armored Neuroi units, replacements were sought out quickly. Not only was the new experimental armor-piercing WCG brought in at once, but any other type of weaponry that could be considered effective was employed. The individual witches' abilities and compatibility with certain firearms created situations in which they were able to score remarkable successes employing standard infantry arms, such as the Type 38 infantry rifle, the Type 96 light infantry gun, and Type 97 20mm anti-tank rifle.

During the 2nd Neuroi World War, numerous witches took full advantage of the Chiha's versatility and long combat range in their fight against the Neuroi. Sergeant Furuko Kitano's successes at the North African front are just one example of the numerous legends surrounding the bravery of the Lioness Princesses.

【ブリタニア王国陸軍　歩兵支援型走行脚】

A12「マチルダII」

『砂漠の女王』にして『ロンメルの恋人』の『鉄壁のドレス』

1

939年、急激に勢力を広げるネウロイに対して、必死の防衛戦を行った陸戦ウイッチにとってマチルダIIは頼もしい相棒であり、多くの将兵を救った。特に緒戦においてその強力なシールドと高い貫通力　を誇る武装をもって比類のない強さを見せつけた。

ガリア沿岸のダンケルクからの欧州撤退作戦、「ダイナモ作戦」で奮戦したロンメル将軍はブリタニア欧州派遣軍のマチルダIIを装備した陸戦ウイッチの戦いを高く評価した。この時点でマチルダIIの数は非常に限られていたにも関わらず、アラス戦においてロンメルの部隊を窮地へと追い込んでいたネウロイをブリタニア第1機甲旅団の魔女達が蹴散らし、一時は相手を押し返すという快挙を成し遂げている。

その後、ロンメルは北アフリカ戦線でも何度もマチルダII装備のブリタニア陸戦ウイッチに助けられた。カールスラント・アフリカ軍団の陸戦ウイッチの装備が脆弱だった頃、ロンメルはマメにブリタニア王立機甲連隊の陸戦ウイッチへと出向いていたことから「既婚者のロンメルの浮気疑惑」「ロンメルのブリタニアの恋人説」などが噴出し、本人も妻に対して身の潔白を証明せざる終えない状況が発生したという噂が書き留められている。

マチルダIIストライカーを装備したもっとも有名なウイッチといえばブリタニア王国陸軍第7機甲師団第4機甲旅団第4王立戦車連隊C中隊隊長のセシリア・グリンダ・マイルズ少佐だ。防御力が優れているとは言え、マチルダII走行脚は鈍重なユニットで、機動性が低い。しかしマイルズ少佐はこのユニットの特徴を完全に把握し、部下達と共に激しい訓練を通して「鈍重な鉄のドレス」を「砂丘のコルベット（装甲海防艦）」へと昇華させた。陣形を組んで砂漠を突き進む第4機甲旅団の光景はさながら海の上を軽快に突き進む戦艦の一列を連想させる。

北アフリカ戦線のマチルダII装備の陸戦ウイッチ得意としていた戦術の一つが煙幕を利用した接近戦だ。幾度となく特殊な煙幕を展開することでネウロイの遠距離攻撃の威力を削ぎ、集団で肉薄して大型ネウロイを討ちとっている。しかしこれには味方の砲兵からの特殊煙幕砲弾の援護が必要不可欠で、細やかな連携プレーと深い信頼関係が欠かせなかった。

マチルダIIは理想的な走行脚とは言い難いが、北アフリカでブリタニアが初期から多数配備できたことから大変重宝された。戦闘不能になったブリタニアのウイッチに替わって、カールスラントのウイッチがマチルダIIで激戦を繰り広げた記録もある。マチルダIIストライカーは北アフリカ戦線での活躍が有名だが、他の戦線でも活躍している。大戦初期、オラーシャ帝国が危機的状況に追い込まれた時、ブリタニアから戦時特別供給されたマチルダIIを地元のウイッチは、凡庸な性能だと揶揄しつつも、機械的信頼性の高さを買われてかなり積極的に運用された。マチルダIIはこの他にも東南アジア方面やカフカス方面でも活躍しており、陸戦ウイッチが戦ったほとんどの戦場で登場している数少ない陸戦ストライカーの一つだ。

A12 "Matilda II"

The "Iron Dress" worn by "The Queen of the Desert" and "Rommel's Lover"

When the Neuroi were rapidly expanding their sphere of influence in 1939, land battle witches engaged in desperate delaying actions against the invading Neuroi found the Matilda II tracked legs to be reliable partners in battle, and their presence was credited with saving the lives of many soldiers. Matilda II's powerful defense shield and armaments with high penetration capabilities made it an unparalleled witch weapon, especially in the early stages of the 2nd Neuroi World War.

General Rommel, who fought so hard during Operation Dynamo, in which humanity retreated from the coast of Gallia at Dunkirk, had high praise for the land battle witches of the Britannian Expeditionary Force and their Matilda IIs. Though their numbers were few, the witches of the 1st Armoured Brigade were able to disrupt the Neuroi that had cornered Rommel's forces in the Battle of Arras and at certain points, these witches were even able to accomplish the amazing feat of pushing the Neuroi back.

Later on, Britannian land battle witches equipped with Matilda II units aided Rommel numerous times in the North African front. In the early stages of the Karlslander Afrikakorps' campaign, there were times when Karlslander witches equipment was still relatively feeble. Rommel would frequently visit the land battle witches of the Royal Tank Regiments, leading to rumors of the married Rommel's infidelity and whispers about Rommel finding a Britannian girlfriend. There are records of hearsay that claim that these distractions reached a point where Rommel had to personally address the issue and explain himself to his wife.

Without a doubt, the most famous witch to employ the Matilda II striker would be Major Cecilia Glinda Miles, Commander of C Squadron, 4th Royal Tank Regiment, 4th Armoured Brigade, 7th Armoured Division of the Royal Britannian Army. While the Matilda II tracked legs do feature superior protective qualities, it is a heavy unit with low mobility. But Major Miles had a thorough understanding of this striker unit's capabilities, and through rigorous training with her girls, she was able to turn the "Heavy Iron Dress" that was the Matilda II into "Corvette of the Dunes". The sight of the 4th Armoured Brigade advancing through the desert in formation was said to resemble a line of warships gliding across the high seas.

One tactic that Matilda II equipped land battle witches proved to be quite adept at was close-quarters combat that involved the use of smoke screens. Aided by special smoke screens that drastically reduced the effectiveness of Neuroi long range attacks, groups of witches would close in and defeat large Neuroi. While this feat was repeated numerous times on the North African front, the tactic was only possible with the aid of specialized smoke shells fired from friendly artillery units, and close teamwork and deep mutual trust were essential for its success.

Although it is difficult to characterize the Matilda IIs as ideal tracked legs, but they were highly prized since they were the only land battle striker units Britannia could supply in bulk from the very outset of the North African campaign. There are records of Karlslander witches fighting Neuroi savagely with the aid of Matilda II units at times when Britannian witches were incapacitated. While the Matilda II tracked legs are famous for their role in the North African front, they were employed in other fronts as well. In the early stages of the war when the Empire of Orussia faced extremely precarious situations, Matilda II units were supplied by Britannia as part of the lend-lease program. While Orussian witches criticized the Matilda II as having somewhat mediocre capabilities, their high mechanical reliability was highly praised and they were, in fact, aggressively employed on the battlefield. Matilda II units also achieved successes in Southeast Asia and the Caucuses, and they are one of the few tracked legs to be employed in nearly every battlefield where land battle witches fought.

【リベリオン陸軍　主力陸上戦闘脚】

M4A3 中型走行脚「シャーマン」

工業国リベリオンが陸戦ウイッチの為に用意したストライカーユニット「シャーマン」は攻撃力も防御力も足りなかったが、その機械的信頼性・稼働率の高さ・整備の単純さ・膨大な生産数では総ての陸戦ストライカーを抜き出ている。シャーマンはリベリオンが人的資産を重要視し、どんな魔女でも充分に乗りこなすのを可能にする「万人のための魔法の杖」と言えるかもしれない。数と時期は一定ではないが、連合国のほとんどが第二次ネウロイ大戦においてシャーマンを運用した。

高い工業力を誇るリベリオンは海上兵器や航空兵器については大戦勃発前もかなりの水準に達していたが、陸戦ストライカーについては非常に遅れていた。長い間、ネウロイが本土でほとんど発生していなかったのもあったが、一端その工業力と科学・魔導技術を振り向けると目覚しい進歩と底力を発揮するのがリベリオンの凄まじさだ。

シャーマンが始めて運用されたのは北アフリカ戦線で、搭乗したのはリベリオンではなくブリタニアのウイッチであった。リベリオンでは魔女の育成に時間が掛かっている一方で、北アフリカ戦線は一刻も早く対処が必要な危機的状況だったので先行して陸戦ストライカーが提供された。リベリオンから届いたシャーマンの慣熟訓練もないまま戦場へと赴いたほどで、車体にチョークで書かれた機材チェックのマーキングが消されていない状態でブリタニア魔女がネウロイと撃ち合っている写真があるくらいだ。

リベリオンの第一機甲師団はM3とM4走行脚が混在した形で北アフリカ戦線に参戦するが、機材の初期不良・訓練不足・指揮官の練度の低さ・戦術の稚拙さが露呈するような大敗を喫する。この時、ネウロイの蹂躙からリベリオン軍を救ったのはロンメルのカールスラントアフリカ軍団と統合戦闘飛行隊「アフリカ」だったが、リベリオンの将兵の一部が遁走する騒ぎまで発生した為に、部隊の大掛かりな再訓練が決定。放棄された機材を始め、大量のリベリオンの機材がカールスタントとブリタニアに提供されることとなった。

そもそもシャーマンを装備したウイッチ単体はやや脆弱であり、集団による連携プレーによって戦うのにもっとも適していた。この特徴を見抜いたのがリベリオンの北アフリカ派遣隊の建て直しを任されたパットン将軍だった。後方での再編成中に無能な指揮官を排斥し、より柔軟な陸戦ウイッチの運用を可能にさせ、潤沢な補給と共に規律と訓練を徹底させることで見る見るうちにリベリオン将兵は士気と覇気を取り戻した。リベリオン陸戦ウイッチに関してはパットン将軍の改革は飽くまで始めの一歩であり、彼女らがカールスタントやブリタニアの魔女達と肩を並べられるようになるにはまだ時間が必要であったが、パットンの多大な貢献に感謝して彼女らの多くは自らを「パットンズ・ガールズ」と称した。

北アフリカでも後にエースへと育ったウイッチが複数居る。二挺の短機関銃でネウロイ砲台を攻略したマリリン・ソヴァン曹長などのエースの他に、エリートウイッチ部隊として名を馳せた第70機甲大隊など有名だ。

リベリオンとしてはとにかくウイッチは貴重であったので、シールドの許容度を超え兼ねないネウロイの攻撃を受けたときにシャーマンが身代わりとなるように設計した。安全マッチやライターで有名なロンサン社にちなんで「ロンサン現象」と呼ばれた。お陰で服がボロボロになったり半裸になるウイッチの数も珍しくなかったがリベリオンウイッチの生存率を高めるのに大きく貢献している。ラフな格好のままでも平気で戦い続けるのを指して、「カウガール」と呼ばれ多くの将兵の信望を集めた。これが転じて、「エンチャンテッド・カウガールズ（魔法の牧童）」または「ラフライダーズ（荒くれ騎馬兵）」などの愛称が定着している。

M4A3 Medium Tracked Legs "Sherman"

"Disposable Strikers" ridden by the "Enchanted Cowgirls"

Although the "Sherman" striker units supplied by the industrial nation of Liberion to its land battle witches were somewhat lacking in offensive and defensive capabilities, their mechanical reliability, operational availability, ease of maintenance, and production numbers far surpassed those of any other land battle striker unit. One could make the argument that the Sherman reflected the Liberion's philosophy of prioritizing the human resources of its witch population and created a "magical wand for the masses" that any witch could satisfactorily operate on the battlefield. While there are variations in numbers and timing, almost every nation involved in the fight against Neuroi employed Shermans during the 2nd Neuroi World War.

Thanks to its high degree of industrialization, Liberion's naval and aerial weapons were fairly advanced even before the outbreak of the war, but as far as land battle strikers go, Liberion lagged very far behind. Part of the reason for this was that Neuroi outbreaks were rare for a long time, but the striking innovation and boundless energy demonstrated by Liberion once they brought the full might of their industry, science, and magic to bear is nothing short of breathtaking.

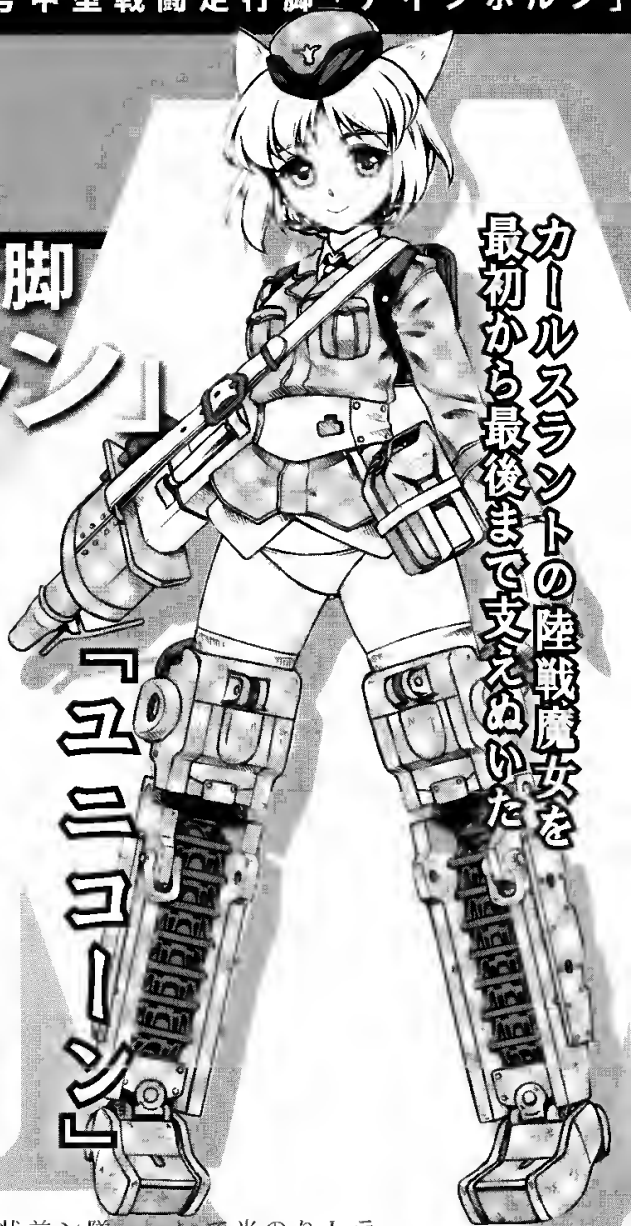
Shermans were first employed on the North African Front, and the first to operate them were in fact witches of Britannia, not Liberion. While Liberion was still bogged down with training its witches, the precarious situation in North Africa made it necessary for Liberion to provide Sherman striker units before their own witches were ready. In some cases, Britannian witches did not have the luxury of equipment familiarity training before heading into battle. There are photographs of 8th Army witches in Sherman striker units still adorned with equipment check chalk markings busily exchanging fire with Neuroi forces. This only illustrates how dire the situation was.

Liberion's 1st Armored Division went into battle in North Africa with its witches equipped with a mixture of M3 and M4 tracked legs, but suffered spectacular defeats that resulted from a combination of teething problems in the equipment, substandard training, subpar command and control skills of the part of the leadership, and inferior tactics. These routs of the Liberion Army were contained thanks to the efforts of the Rommel's Karlslander Afrikakorps and Joint Fighter Squadron "Africa," but once it became apparent there were instances of Liberion soldiers fleeing in the face of the enemy, the decision was made to retrain the units. Beginning with the equipment abandoned by the 1st Armored Division, large quantities of Liberion equipment was provided to Karlslander and Britannian units for their use.

It must be noted that Sherman-equipped witches were rather feeble, and they were much better suited to engage the enemy as part of a group of witches The man who made this realization this was none other than the man entrusted with the rebuilding and training of the Liberion expeditionary force to North Africa--General Patton. During retraining period in the rear, Patton got rid of incompetent commanders and made it possible for land battle witches to be employed in a more flexible manner. Furthermore, he secured ample supplies to keep the troops happy while he rigorously enforced discipline and accelerated the witches' training regimen. It was not long before Liberion troops regained the morale and drive to fight. General Patton's reforms where only the first step needed to make Liberion land battle witches worthy fighters, and more time was needed before they could be considered the equal of the witches of Karlsland and Britannia, but many of the 1st Armored Division's felt such deep gratitude toward Patton's contribution that many referred to themselves as "Patton's Girls" in tribute to him.

There were a number of Sherman riders in North Africa that would become aces. Sergeant Marylyn Savon destroyed a Neuroi gun emplacement with two submachine guns, and then there are the famous elite witches of the 70th Tank Battalion, 39th Regimental Combat Team, 9th Infantry Division.

Witches were considered very valuable in Liberion, and this resulted in the Sherman being designed to sacrifice itself when a Neuroi attack exceeded the defensive capabilities of the witch. This ability of the Sherman was referred to as the Lonsan Effect based on the famous manufacturer of safety matches and oil lighters. It was not uncommon for witches to find their clothing burned and disintegrating, or even be half-naked as a consequence of the Lonsan Effect, but it drastically improved the survival rate of Liberion' s witches. The way many Liberion witches would casually continue fighting even with their clothing in tatters won the admiration of many soldiers, who called them "Cowgirls." This nickname ushered in other nicknames such as "the Enchanted Cowgirls" and "the Roughriders."



カールスラントの陸戦魔女を最初から最後まで支えぬいた

『ユニコーン』

【カールスラント陸軍　主力陸上戦闘脚】

Ⅳ号中型戦闘走行脚「アインホルン」

頼れる一角獣こそⅣ号中型戦闘走行脚こそカールスラントがもっとも多く生産した陸戦ストライカーであり、長年に渡ってこまめに改変されながら最後まで多くのカールスラント・パンツァー・フロイラインの愛馬として活躍した。

カールスラントは先のネウロイ大戦の教訓から火力支援用の重装備型や運動戦向けの走攻守のバランスの良い主戦力型など複数の陸戦ストライカーユニットを開発した。開発の乱立にはそれ相応の弊害があったが、大きな利点も二つあった。一つ目は多種多様なネウロイの脅威と戦況の変化に応じて様々な装備を用意出来たこと。二つ目はウイッチの潜在能力を引き出す器を複数用意できたので、潜在能力をフルに発揮させやすい相性の良いストライカーユニットを見つけ易かったことだ。ウイッチの魔力の傾向は同一ではない。訓練によって魔力の制御性を高められるにしても個人の生来の資質をうまく伸ばせられないと、宝の持ち腐れになりかねないのだ。

本来Ⅳ号は火力支援用に開発され、魔導エンジンの仕様とその魔力出力配分の調整もそれに合わせて設計されていた。しかし実際に本格的な戦いが始まると、主戦力になるはずだったⅢ号中型戦闘走行脚が意外と威力が足りないと判明する。Ⅳ号支援型戦闘走行脚の拡張性の高さとやや古臭いながらも堅実な信頼性に目をつけたカールスラントの装甲総監グデーリアン将軍は即座にⅣ号の改修を断行。これが大成功となる。

カールスラントが北アフリカで戦い始めた頃、Ⅳ号陸戦ストライカーの数は少なかった。主武装である短砲身のKhK37L／24魔戦砲は射程距離が短かったが、近距離でならばかなり装甲の硬いネウロイを撃破出来る数少ない貴重な戦力だったので、ここぞという時に投入される切り札のような存在だった。当然Ⅳ号ストライカーの装備を許されるのは陸戦ウイッチの中でもエリートばかりであり、多くのエースの出現を可能にしている。

例えば北アフリカ戦線では第15装甲師団第8装甲連隊で中隊長を務めたの「カプッツォの獅子」ことハンネローレ・キュンメル大尉がⅣ号ストライカーをもって傑出した活躍を披露。前線で高い戦闘能力を発揮するだけに留まらず、一見絶望的な状況でも正確な状況認識と友軍との連携をすることで勝利を勝ち取ることが出来た。柏葉付騎士十字章を賜与したキュンメル大尉はその能力を買われ、後に連隊長にまで上り詰める。

一見Ⅳ号走行脚はそれほど戦闘能力が高く無さそうに見える古臭いストライカーだが、チームプレイをうまく発揮した魔女に手に掛かれば攻撃・防御の両方でとてつもない威力を発揮した。魔戦砲が短砲身から長砲身（KhK40L／43のちにL／48）へと強化されたF2／G型以降となると遠距離攻撃力が向上し、G型後期からはシュルツェンという外付け装甲板を装備することで防御力もさらに強化させた。ブリタニア語では短砲身装備のⅣ号をマークⅣ、長砲身を装備したⅣ号をマークⅣスペシャル、そして防御力を強化したG型以降をマークⅣエキストラ・スペシャルと称することが多かった。装備が潤沢であったリベリオンとブリタニアであったが、常にⅣ号走行脚を装備したパンツァー・フロイラインに大変な信頼を寄せていた。

注視すればⅣ号走行脚「アインホルン（ユニコーン）」とⅥ号走行脚「ティガー」は明らか別物のストライカーユニットだが、ネウロイに圧倒されて危機的な状況に陥ったリベリオン将兵が二つを見分けることが出来ず、Ⅳ号をⅥ号と呼び間違えることが多々発生した。

Mark IV Medium Fighting Tracked Legs "Einhorn"

The "unicorn" that aided the Karlsland witches from the beginning to the very end.

The "Reliable Unicorn," or the Mark IV medium fighting tracked legs, was Karlsland's most heavily produced land battle striker unit. They performed admirably as the Karlsländer Panzerfraulein's partner on the battlefield, undergoing numerous incremental upgrades over the long period they were in service.

Lessons learned from the previous conflicts against the Neuroi led Karlsland to develop multiple types of land battle striker units with various design goals in mind. Examples included a heavily-equipped striker that could act as fire support, and another was a striker with balanced mobility, offensive, and defensive capabilities that could act as a main battle unit in mobile warfare. Developing so many different types had certain disadvantages, but it had two large advantages. First, having a diverse set of designs and units allowed them to counter a wide range of threats posed by the Neuroi, and also allowed Karlsland to respond flexibly to the rapidly shifting currents of the conflict. Second, the wide variety of striker units allowed witches to experiment. They could find which striker units they were most compatible with, and exploit their abilities to their full potential. The magical abilities of witches are not uniform. Although training will improve a witch's control of her magic, unless her equipment is able to draw out her innate abilities, her full potential may never be realized.

The Mark IV was initially designed to specialize in providing fire support, and its magic engine and magical power distribution was designed with those demands in mind. But once combat became more commonplace, the abilities of the Mark III -- the striker the Mark IV was mean to support -- were revealed to be rather lackluster, even though they were slated to be the main combat arm of land battle witches. Heinz Guderian, the Karlsland Inspector-General of Armored Troops, took note of how the Mark IV, while old fashioned in certain ways, was reliable and had ample potential for further enhancement, and made the call to revamp the Mark IV to replace the Mark III. This decision proved to be a resounding success.

When Karlsland started fighting in North Africa, the number of Mark IV land battle striker units available was limited. Its main armament, the short barreled KhK37 L/24 Witch Combat Gun (WCG) had limited range, but at shorter ranges, witches employing this ordnance could neutralize Neuroi with considerably thick armor. For this reason, Mark IV-equipped witches were treated as trump cards, and were held back for fighting at particularly crucial points. It goes without saying that the Mark IV was reserved for elite land battle witches and it gave birth to numerous aces.

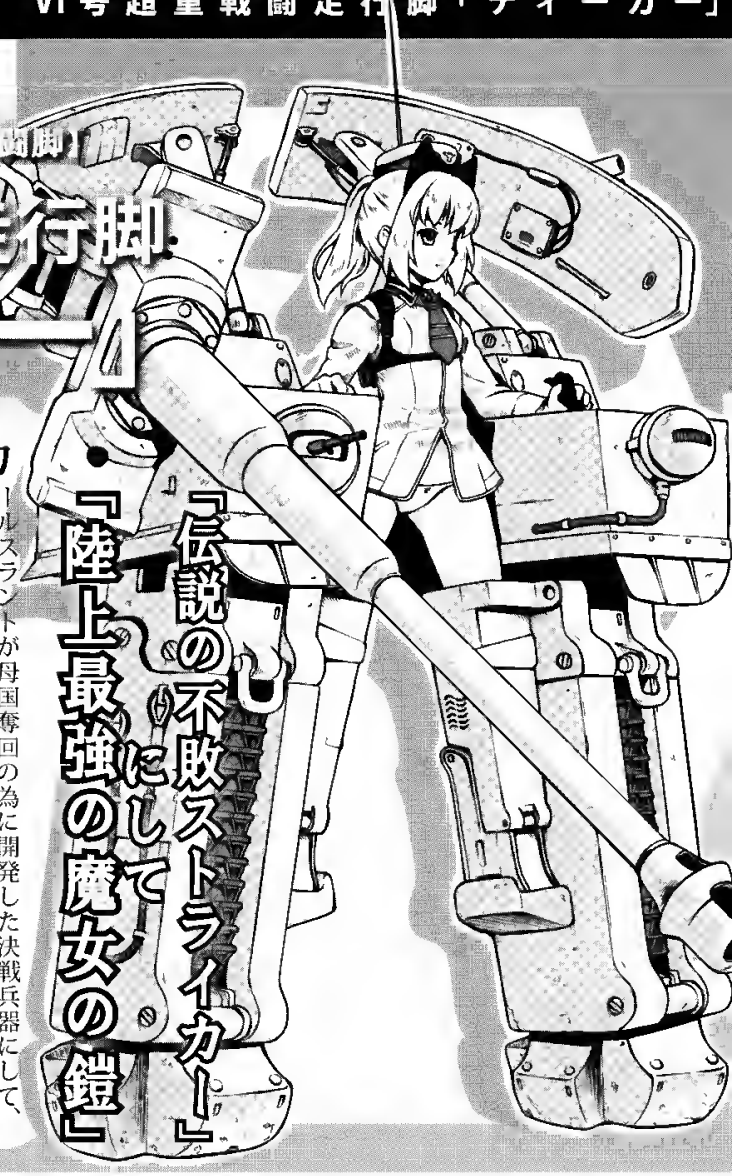
For example, Captain Hannelore Kummel, a company commander in the 8th Panzer Regiment, 15th Panzer Division -- better known as "The Lion of Capuzzo" - achieved phenomenal success employing the Mark IV striker in North Africa. Not only did she exhibit exemplary combat skills on the front lines, but she was able to secure many victories even in seemingly hopeless situations thanks to her acute situational awareness and skillful ability to work in tandem with friends forces. Captain Kummel was awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and, in recognition of her exemplary abilities, she would later move on to command an entire regiment.

At first glance, the Mark IV tracked legs may give the impression of an old-fashioned striker with mediocre fighting capabilities, but in the hands of accomplished witches employing intricate teamwork, the Mark IV could exhibit astonishing offensive and defensive capabilities. With the upgrading of the standard-issue witch combat gun from a short barrel to a long-barrel version (KhK40 L/43, later further upgraded to the L/48) in the F2/G variant, the Mark IV's long-range offensive abilities were substantially improved. External armor sheets, referred to as "Schurzen (skirts)", were added beginning with the later G variants, improving the Mark IV's defensive capabilities. In Britannian parlance, the "Mark IV" referred to those equipped with the short-barreled WCG, the "Mark IV Special" was the name for those equipped with the long-barreled WCG , and the "Mark IV Extra Special" was the label reserved for those with improved defensive capabilities. While both Liberion and Britannia had better logistics and more ample supplies of their ordnance, they always had great faith in the abilities of Panzerfraulein equipped with Mark IV tracked legs.

Althrogh the Mark IV "Einhorn (unicorn)" tracked legs, and the Mark VI "Tiger" tracked legs look nothing alike, Liberian soldiers, rejoicing at the sight of Karlsland land battle witches coming to their rescue when death at the hands of the Neuroi seemed all but certain, had a tendency to mix the two together.

【カールスラント陸軍　大型陸上戦闘脚】

VI号超重戦闘走行脚「ティーガー」



「伝説の不敗ストライカー」にして「陸上最強の魔女の鎧」

カールスラントが母国奪回の為に開発した決戦兵器にして、1943年の段階では単体のストライカーユニットとしては最強の陸戦ストライカー「ティーガー」。その活躍と名声は神話の領域に達している。同じ戦場にティーガーを装備した陸戦ウイッチがいると知るだけで士気は大きく上昇し、一般将兵ですらネウロイに打ち勝てると言う自信で鼓舞させた。生産性・整備性・航続距離に大きな問題を抱えてはいたが、それらの欠点を補って余る攻撃力と防御力はまさに空前絶後である。状況とウイッチ次第では一騎当千の活躍を可能とする伝説の陸戦ストライカーと言えよう。

ティーガーが最初に投入された戦線は北アフリカであった。フレデリカ・ポルシェ技術少佐率いるティーガー実験部隊は多くの苦難を乗り越えてティーガーの実用化を可能にさせ、同部隊の専属ウイッチ、シャーロット・リューダー軍曹（当時）は後に501重戦車大隊のトップエースとして北アフリカでのネウロイの撃退に多大な貢献をした。

ティーガーはリベリオンの協力の元で戦場で稼動していたこともあり、リベリオンの部隊の援護を率先して行っていたのだが、リベリオンの兵士の一部は遠距離から援護してくれる陸戦ストライカーを総じてティーガーと呼ぶ癖があり、誤解と誇張の逸話も散見できる。

ティーガーユニットの生産は困難であり、定期的な整備が重要な上に、その運用には多くの補給物資を必要としていた。ティーガーユニットはどこに行くにしても専門の整備チームを率いて戦っていたことから、「まるで大名行列だ」と扶桑人が証言している。しかしながらきちんと整備されたティーガーは意外と足が速く、信頼性も高かった。ティーガーユニットを取材した記者がその様子をわかりやすく説明する絵本『ティーガー・フィーベル』を発表したところ大ヒットとなり、ティーガーの無敵伝説の構築の一役買っている。

ティーガーの絶大な威力に惚れ込んだ扶桑皇国陸軍が技術試験用として一台～二台を購入して運用を試みたという記録がある。扶桑のティーガー乗り魔女は自らの車両に逆さ漢字をマーキングしていたが、詳細についてはまだまだ不明な点が多い。

ティーガーはかなりの魔力を必要としており、陸戦ウイッチなら誰でも操れたというわけではない。一般的に飛行脚の方が走行脚より多くの魔力を必要としているとされているが、ティーガーはこの限りではなかった。膨大な魔力が必要であり、ティーガーを乗りこなせるのは並大抵のことではなかった。ただ、ストライカーとウイッチの相性の問題もあり、凡庸な陸戦ストライカーではあまり活躍できなかったウイッチがタイガーで突然化けるということも発生している。

ちなみにティーガー装備のウイッチは遠距離から中距離の目標に対してはとてつもない威力を発揮するが、短距離となると主武装の88ミリ砲の取り回しが困難になる。この為にティーガーは近接防御兵器としてMG34機関銃を装備しているが、さらに効果的だったのが一般将兵が軽戦闘脚装備のウイッチとの共同作戦であった。事実、一般の戦車や機関銃やバズーカを装備した歩兵がティーガーと一緒に行軍している写真が数多く残っている。既に旧式化したカールスラントのII号軽戦闘脚やロマーニャのM13／40戦闘脚との仲良く陣形を組んでいる様はなんとも微笑ましい。

ティーガーは北アフリカ戦線、東部戦線、西部戦線でも活躍しており、数々の陸戦エースを生み出した。ロマーニャ防衛戦の最前線、「ゴシックライン」ではかなり変わった現地改造車の活躍が報告されている。第二次ネウロイ大戦が終結するまで獅子奮迅の勢いでその力をネウロイに対して発揮し続けた。

Mark VI Extra Heavy Fighting Tracked Legs "Tiger"

The "undefeated striker of legend" and "the most powerful armor worn by witches on land".

A decisive weapon developed by Karlsland in their desire to retake their homeland, the "Tiger" land battle striker unit was the most powerful single striker unit in existence in 1943. Its accomplishments and fame reached mythic proportions. Upon hearing news that a land battle witch in the same battlefield was equipped with a Tiger, the morale of the troops would dramatically improve, and their presence gave even regular soldiers the confidence to feel like they could defeat the Neuroi all by themselves. While the Mark VI had numerous issues related to production difficulties, strenuous maintenance demands, and relatively limited range, these shortcomings were easily outweighed by the Tiger's unparalleled offensive and defensive abilities. Depending on the situation and skill of the witch riding it, the Tiger could take on hordes of Neuroi and win, making it a truly legendary land battle striker

Tigers were first deployed on the North African front. A Tiger field trials unit led by Technical Officer Major Frederica Porsche overcame numerous difficulties and managed to make the Tiger an operational reality. The witch assigned to this unit, Sergeant Charlotte Lüder, would later become the top ace in the 501st Schwere Panzerabteilung (heavy tank battalion) and contributed tremendously toward driving the Neuroi out of Africa.

In the field, Tigers benefited greatly from the aid provided by the Liberian forces, and this led to many situations where Tiger-equipped witches provided support for units of Liberion, but due to the tendency of many Liberian soldiers to refer to any land battle striker capable of providing fire support from long range as a "Tiger," testimonials that include misunderstandings and exaggerations are commonplace.

The production of Tiger units was a laborious process, and regular maintenance was vital to keeping them operational. In addition, special logistical considerations were required for their use, such as a ready supply of spare parts and other expendables. Tiger striker units were usually accompanied by dedicated maintenance teams, which lead those from Fusō to quip that the group resembled the entourages that accompanied traveling daimyo lords in the feudal period. At the same time, a properly-maintained Tiger actually boasted surprising mobility and fairly high reliability. A news correspondent who covered the daily operations of a Tiger unit in action wrote a children's book titled "Tigerfibel." The book explained the operations of the Tiger striker unit in terms that were easy to understand, eventually becoming a bestseller that helped perpetuate the Tiger's legend of invincibility.

Records tell of Fusō officers who were so impressed by the awesome powers of the Tiger that one or two Tiger striker units were purchased by the Imperial Fusō Army for technological experimentation purposes. There are accounts of Fusō witches adorning their Tigers with upside-down Fusō ideograms, but details are very sketchy regarding this.

Tiger units require large quantities of magical energy, and not all land battle witches were capable of operating them. As a general rule, aviation striker units required more magical energy than their land-based tracked leg counterparts, but the Tiger was an exception. The Tiger consumed tremendous amounts of magical energy and no ordinary witch could operate them. However, it is important to take note of compatibility issues surrounding witches and their striker units. There have been cases where a witch whose performance was rather mediocre when equipped with a standard land battle striker would exhibit vastly different abilities when coupled with a Tiger.

Witches equipped with Tigers could inflict devastating damage on targets from medium to long range, but when it came to engaging Neuroi at close range, the main 88mm armament of the Tiger unit was rather cumbersome. For this reason, the Tiger was armed with a MG34 machinegun to cope with close-range threats, but it was even more effective to conduct joint missions with the Tiger paired with regular infantry or witches in light fighting tracked legs. In fact, there are many photographs of witches equipped with Tiger units advancing alongside regular tanks or infantry armed with machineguns and bazookas. There are also rather amusing shots of Tiger striker units in formation with a group of already obsolete Karlsland Mark II light fighting legs or Romagnian M13/40 fighting legs.

The Tiger tracked legs won great fame on the North African, Eastern, and Western fronts, giving birth to many land battle aces witches. There have been reports of rather peculiar field-modified Tigers achieving great success on the Gothic Line, the defense line that was part of the Romagna campaign. The Tiger striker units directed their might against the Neuroi and fought ferociously to the very end of the 2nd Neuroi World War.